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ABSTRACT

Following a review of Alberta (Canada) provincial policies related to teacher preparation, certification, evaluation, and professional development, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards advised the Minister of Education on ideas that should be included in a framework to improve educational quality. The policy positions outlined in this paper reflect the Minister of Education's commitment to a provincial policy framework that guides individual, cooperative, and collaborative actions to enhance the quality of education provided to all Alberta students. This paper specifies the steps for enhancing the quality of teaching in Alberta, including: (1) The Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching to be used as guides in teacher preparation programs, teaching, teachers' initial and ongoing professional growth, and teacher evaluation; (2) improved teacher preparation with support for ongoing collaboration to improve teaching and establish procedures to assure the effectiveness of teacher preparation and competencies; (3) teacher certification and amending the Certification of Teachers Regulation to specify both academic and competency requirements for interim and permanent certification; and (4) teacher evaluation and professional development. Appendix A includes descriptions of elements in quality teaching; required knowledge, skills, and aptitudes; and certification implementation. (JLS)

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ED 401 250

An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta

A Policy Position Paper

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Introduction

Strategies to enhance the quality of teaching in Alberta are outlined in Government's three year plans for education, *Meeting the Challenge 1994/95 - 1996/97*, and *Meeting the Challenge II 1995/96 - 1997/98*.

Meeting the Challenge II set out three key strategies to improve teaching. Focusing on the education that teachers, themselves, undertake, the three strategies are to:

- update teacher preparation and teacher certification requirements to reflect the most current understanding of effective teaching;
- establish competencies for beginning and experienced teachers; and
- develop a coordinated approach to delivering professional development opportunities for teachers.

Alberta Education reviewed provincial policies related to teacher preparation, certification, evaluation and professional development, and recognized that the quality of teaching would be enhanced if provincial policies provided an integrated framework to guide, encourage and support teachers' professional growth throughout their careers. The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards advised the Honourable Halvar C. Jonson, Minister of Education, on ideas that should be included in such a framework.

On September 28, 1995, the Minister released a discussion paper, *Quality teaching: Quality education for Alberta students*. Almost 8500 copies of the paper were distributed to MLAs, school councils, school staffs, principals, superintendents, board chairpersons, education organizations, Deans of Education, students in faculties of education, individuals who wrote or telephoned to request copies, individuals who had written to the Minister about teacher licensure, and members of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards and the Board of Reference. Two hundred and forty six written responses were returned by individuals, large and small groups, post secondary institutions and education organizations.

On November 6-7 and 14-15, forty one individuals representing a cross section of the education community responded to the discussion paper at workshops in Edmonton and Calgary.

Almost all respondents expressed strong support for directions set by proposals. Notwithstanding their expressions of overall support, many respondents posed questions, made recommendations or expressed concern regarding one or more of the specifics outlined in the discussion paper.

The Minister met with representatives of provincial education organizations and teacher preparation institutions on December 20, 1995, to review a summary of responses to the discussion paper. Also discussed were draft recommendations from Alberta Education regarding policy positions contained in this document. The meeting concluded with:

- agreement that the recommendations put forward by Alberta Education accurately and reasonably address responses to the discussion paper;
- support for quick action in policy development and implementation; and
- a request that the education organizations be consulted on development and implementation schedules.

Quality teaching: Quality education for Alberta students set the direction. *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* takes the next step based on questions, recommendations and comments received through the consultation process.

Policy Position I: Quality Teaching

Representatives of the Alberta School Boards Association, Alberta Teachers' Association, College of Alberta School Superintendents and teacher preparation institutions have collaborated with Alberta Education to develop a Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching and also have identified key competencies (knowledge, skills and attributes - KSAs) graduates of teacher preparation programs must have in order to meet the standard of quality teaching, and to pursue their initial and ongoing professional growth. (Please see Appendix A.)

The Quality Teaching Standard, descriptors of quality teaching and KSAs will be authorized under Ministerial Order following discussions with educational partners. The Minister, from time to time, will collaborate with stakeholders to review and revise the standard, descriptors and KSAs.

Quality teaching standard and descriptors

The Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching can be used to guide many activities including teacher preparation, teaching, teachers' initial and ongoing professional growth and teacher evaluation. The standard and descriptors:

- recognize and accommodate students' best educational interests;
- reflect that there is no single model of quality teaching;
- include but are not limited to aspects of teaching under s. 13 of the *School Act*;
- include the exercise of professional judgment;
- include moral and ethical aspects of teaching (referencing those aspects of the ethical dimension addressed under the *Teaching Profession Act*);
- reflect that teaching occurs in a variety of contexts;
- are written in clear language that avoids excessive use of jargon; and
- allow for the use of a variety of evaluation models, procedures and techniques.

KSAs

The KSAs can provide a focus for: faculties of education in developing and delivering teacher preparation programs; individuals preparing to become teachers; teachers who hold interim certification; and beginning teachers, supervisors, evaluators and mentors. The KSAs:

- include all aspects of teaching;
- reflect that teaching occurs in a variety of contexts;
- reflect that there is no single model of teaching;
- avoid excessive use of jargon;
- are limited in number; and
- allow for the use of a variety of evaluation models, procedures and techniques.

Policy Position II: Teacher Preparation

The Boards of Governors of Concordia University College, The King's University College, University of Alberta, University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge are invited to enter into separate *Memoranda of Agreement* with the Minister of Education, before 1997. Clauses in the *Memoranda* may come into effect on different dates to allow for suitable transition periods.

The objectives the Minister intends to achieve by entering into agreements are to:

- foster and support ongoing collaboration to improve teaching by enhancing teacher preparation programs and teachers' continuing professional growth;
- establish procedures by which the public can be assured of the effectiveness of teacher preparation and competency of individuals who are issued initial certification; and
- facilitate and make meaningful the initial certification of individuals who complete teacher preparation programs.

The *Memoranda* will continue in effect from year to year, and will provide that the parties meet and review the agreements on or before each fifth anniversary date. Each *Memorandum* will be subject to cancellation or amendment on written notice of one year by either party to the agreement, or any other mutually agreed period.

The *Memoranda* will specify only agreements between the Minister and the teacher preparation institutions. Common clauses will identify responsibilities and outline procedures whereby:

- a specified officer of the institution will recommend individuals for interim certification. Each recommendation will include an attestation that the individual has successfully completed a program that was designed and delivered to provide the individual with
  - the ability to apply the KSAs specified under Ministerial Order. (Please see Appendix A),
  - the ability to use judgment in applying the KSAs toward student learning, and
  - a foundation of knowledge, theory and experiences upon which to base professional growth in keeping with the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching, specified under Ministerial Order. (Please see Appendix A);
- data on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs at each institution can be gathered from teachers and other field-based educators, on an ongoing basis;
- these data can be combined with data on the effectiveness of teachers' professional development, and can be made public in annual Ministerial reports; and
- each institution will provide the Minister with biennial reports that
  - indicate how the institution has responded to the annual Ministerial reports, and
  - make recommendations to link, more effectively, teacher preparation and beginning teachers' professional development.

An amendment to one or more clause(s) in a *Memorandum* will require the consent of all parties to all *Memoranda*, and will result in identical amendments to all *Memoranda*.

Notwithstanding that *Memoranda* will contain common clauses, the *Memoranda* between the Minister and Concordia University College, and the Minister and The King's University College will contain additional clauses to reflect that:

- the two institutions are the first private colleges with which the Minister has entered into agreements regarding teacher certification; and
- the Minister has set conditions for entering into and continuing the agreements.

The additional clauses will assign responsibilities and outline processes to satisfy the Minister that, over time, each institution continues to offer a high quality teacher preparation program congruent with the institution's program proposal approved by the Minister, and without recourse to Government funding. The Minister may cancel or amend one or more of these clauses on written notice of one year, or any other mutually agreed period. The cancellation or amendment of one or more of these clauses in one *Memorandum* may be made independently of the other *Memorandum*, and will not require the consent of the party to the other *Memorandum*.

Policy Position III: Teacher Certification

The Minister of Education will consult representatives of the education community in amending the *Certification of Teachers Regulation* to specify both academic and competency requirements for interim and permanent certification. Amendments will be in place before 1997. Clauses in the *Regulation* may come into effect on different dates to allow for suitable transition periods.

The *Regulation* will reference the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching, and the key competencies (KSAs) expected of applicants for interim certification specified under Ministerial Order. (Please see Appendix A.)

The *Regulation* will provide that:

- the Minister may issue an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate to an individual who
  - holds an Alberta Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree or equivalent,
  - has been recommended by the specified officer of the institution that conferred the applicant's B.Ed., where the recommendation conforms to the Memorandum of Agreement between the Minister and that institution. (Note: This requirement will not apply to applicants from out of province), and
  - applies for interim certification;
- in applying for interim certification, an applicant will attest that he or she
  - has acquired the KSAs specified under Ministerial Order,
  - has developed the ability to exercise judgment in applying the KSAs toward student learning, and
  - commits to teaching practice and ongoing professional growth in keeping with the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching specified under Ministerial Order;

- the term of the Interim Professional Teaching Certificate will be three years;
- an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate may be reinstated for additional three year terms on application by the individual or on recommendation of a provincial signing authority (usually a superintendent of schools);
- an application or recommendation to reinstate an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate that is made five or more years after the individual first met the academic requirements for interim certification, and each reinstatement thereafter, will be accompanied by proof that the individual has completed an upgrading program or other professional development requirement(s) specified by the Minister.

The *Regulation* will provide that the Minister may issue Letters of Authority in special cases.

The *Regulation* will provide that:

- the Minister may issue a Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate to a teacher who
  - holds an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate,
  - has taught under valid authority in Alberta schools for a minimum of two school years or equivalent length of time,
  - is recommended by a provincial signing authority, and
  - submits an application to the Minister;
- a recommendation for permanent certification will include an attestation by a provincial signing authority that the teacher, in his or her practice
  - consistently uses the KSAs specified under Ministerial Order in ways that effectively help students learn,
  - consistently demonstrates sound professional judgment in all matters related to teaching, and
  - has demonstrated significant professional growth in keeping with the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching specified under Ministerial Order;
- an application for permanent certification will include an attestation by the applicant to
  - the efficacy of his or her teacher preparation program and subsequent professional development activities, and
  - his or her commitment to teaching practice and ongoing professional growth in keeping with the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching specified under Ministerial Order.

The *Regulation* will provide for appeals regarding decisions:

- to revoke or not to recommend, issue or reinstate an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate; and
- not to recommend or issue a Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate.

The Minister will support the appeal provisions by maintaining, at arms length, a Certification Appeal Committee (C.A.C.) to hear appeals. The C.A.C. will be comprised of representatives of stakeholder organizations.

Alberta Education will prepare and distribute information materials on certification requirements and procedures.

Policy Position IV: Teacher Evaluation

The Minister of Education will consult the Alberta School Boards Association, Alberta Teachers' Association and College of Alberta School Superintendents in amending the *Provincial Teacher Evaluation Policy*. The amended *Provincial Policy* will be in place before 1997.

The *Provincial Policy* will require that boards (including private schools and private ECS operators) review and revise their current teacher evaluation policies, and implement them on or before August 31, 1998.

The *Provincial Policy* will direct and guide boards' development of policy and procedures to

- encourage, foster and assist teachers' professional growth at identified stages of their careers;
- determine whether each teacher's teaching is acceptable or unacceptable, and to respond quickly and effectively to either determination; and
- gather information and communicate annually, to the public, what actions have been taken to maintain and enhance the quality of teaching in the jurisdiction.

The *Provincial Policy* will provide that:

- Alberta Education will assist local authorities develop teacher evaluation policies; and
- the Minister may direct that an inquiry be made or an appeal be heard into any matter related to teacher evaluation where he deems it is necessary and in the best interests of students and the public to do so.

The *Provincial Policy* will provide that:

- school boards develop, keep current and implement a written teacher evaluation policy that is consistent with the *Provincial Policy*, relevant statutes, and the Quality Teaching Standard and descriptors of quality teaching, as well as the KSAs specified under Ministerial Order. (Please see Appendix A);
- boards' teacher evaluation policies be:
  - developed by boards in consultation with administrators and teachers, and with the advice of school councils, and
  - applied fairly, reasonably and consistently, in keeping with principles of fundamental justice and due process;
- boards apprise administrators, teachers and school councils of their policies; and
- boards advise the public that teacher evaluation policies are a matter of public record, available on request.

The *Provincial Policy* will include relevant sections of the:

- *School Act*;
- *Certification of Teachers Regulation*;
- *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation*; and
- *Ministerial Order* on the Quality Teaching Standard, descriptors of quality teaching and KSAs.

The *Provincial Policy* will require that boards' teacher evaluation policies include provisions to address the following which are organized, here, under topical headings.

guiding principles

Procedures, actions, judgments, decisions made and the exercise of responsibilities and authorities under the policy will be directed by:

- the best educational interests of students; and
- principles of fundamental justice and due process.

general

The delegation of authorities, and identification of responsibilities and accountabilities will be clear and specific.

Procedures will be in place to generate and make known broad jurisdiction-wide professional development guidelines that recognize teacher and school objectives, and that are consistent with:

- provincial and jurisdiction goals and initiatives; and
- the Quality Teaching Standard, descriptors of quality teaching and KSAs specified under Ministerial Order.

Procedures will be in place to monitor implementation of the board's teacher evaluation policy, and to inform the public annually on what is being done to enhance and ensure the quality of teaching provided to students.

appeals

Teacher evaluation policies will provide for appeals of key decisions.

Appeal procedures will:

- preclude bias and perceptions of bias, and
- provide that all parties to an appeal have reasonable access to information that is material to specifics under appeal.

identification and distribution of resources

Boards will identify and allocate resources to contribute to:

- individual teachers' professional development; and
- the professional development of specialized groups, jurisdiction-wide professional development initiatives and remediation activities.

provincial and local standards

The provincial Quality Teaching Standard, descriptors of quality teaching and KSAs, or locally developed standard(s), descriptors and KSAs that are consistent with the provincial standard, descriptors and KSAs will be embodied in boards' teacher evaluation policies. The provincial and locally developed standard, descriptors and KSAs may be supplemented with standard(s), descriptors and KSAs consistent with the board's mission (e.g. religious objectives), and with criteria deemed appropriate for making employment decisions.

specific responsibilities of teachers, superintendents and principals

Each teacher under a contract of employment will be responsible and accountable for:

- meeting the board's standard(s) of quality teaching;
- developing, implementing, helping to monitor and reporting on their annual individualized professional development plan; and
- participating in supervision, evaluation and remediation activities.

Superintendents and principals will be responsible and accountable for:

- supervising each teacher's teaching on an ongoing basis in keeping with provisions of the *School Act* and board policy;
- determining whether a teacher's practice is acceptable or unacceptable;
- applying procedures appropriate to a situation; and
- adhering to procedures established under board policy.

Superintendents or principals will be authorized to delegate, to a staff or representative body of teachers under the superintendent's or principal's leadership, responsibilities to assist in the development, implementation and monitoring of teachers' individualized professional development plans.

Superintendents and principals will be delegated authority to prepare and deliver a notice for remediation as a lawful order of the board.

individualized professional development plans

Each teacher employed under a contract of employment to a board will develop, implement, and complete an annual individualized professional development plan, in collaboration with the superintendent, principal or representative body of teachers. The plan will include a culminating report.

Where a teacher holds an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate or is employed under a contract other than a continuing contract, the objectives of the teacher's individualized professional development plan will focus initially and primarily on:

- requirements for permanent certification; and
- other relevant criteria adopted under board policy.

Annually, each teacher will submit his or her completed individualized professional development plan to the principal who will review the plan with the teacher.

The principal will keep teachers' individualized professional development plans in the school for a specified period, whether or not they have been completed, unless there is reasonable justification for doing otherwise.

A teacher who holds permanent certification and is employed under a continuing contract may, in lieu of completing an annual individualized professional development plan and under the leadership of the superintendent or principal, provide one year of specified mentorship service to a teacher who holds interim certification and is employed under a probationary contract.

supervision

Supervision procedures will provide for a range of practices, and may include growth-oriented teacher assessments that focus on a specific area(s) of practice.

Supervision procedures for teachers who hold an Interim Professional Teaching Certificate or who are employed under a contract other than a continuing contract will provide for regularly scheduled, comprehensive evaluations.

Supervision procedures for teachers who hold a Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate and are employed under a continuing contract will not provide for regularly scheduled, comprehensive evaluations.

outcomes of supervision

Notwithstanding any other provision in a teacher evaluation policy, a board or superintendent may suspend the teacher from the performance of duties under provisions of the *School Act*.

Where the superintendent or principal, based on the information at hand, deems a teacher's teaching acceptable

- ongoing supervision will continue, and
- the teacher will continue to implement annual professional development plans.

Where the superintendent or principal determine the information at hand warrants an investigation into a teacher's teaching, the superintendent or principal will avoid pre-judgments regarding the acceptability of the behavior(s) or practice(s) in question. In keeping with the principles of fundamental justice and due process, the superintendent or principal will meet, forthwith, with the teacher to:

- clarify any misconceptions;
- advise the teacher of the behavior(s) or practice(s) in question and its relationship to the board's standard(s) of quality teaching;
- establish timelines for subsequent actions which will be set to minimize disruptions to students' learning;
- advise the teacher that ongoing supervision will continue, and that an evaluation(s) of the teacher's teaching will be undertaken – including the nature of the evaluation, and the criteria and standards that will be used;
- advise the teacher of the potential consequence(s) of the evaluation should a determination be made the teacher's teaching is acceptable or unacceptable;
- or, rather than conducting an evaluation, the superintendent or principal may provide the teacher an opportunity to submit forthwith and to the satisfaction of the superintendent or principal, written commitments to: remediate the unacceptable behavior or practice to a specified standard; undertake a specified remediation process under a timeline that minimizes disruptions to students' learning; maintain the new behavior or practice indefinitely or for a specified time; facilitate the superintendent's or principal's ongoing supervision and evaluations to determine whether the unacceptable behavior or practice has been remediated and maintained within and for the specified time periods; and acknowledge the consequences of not meeting the commitments; and
- the superintendent or principal will prepare and deliver to the teacher a written account of the meeting.

Where evidence secured through supervision or evaluation(s) substantiates that a teacher's teaching does not meet the board's standard(s) of quality teaching, the superintendent or principal will deem the teacher's teaching unacceptable. In keeping with the principles of fundamental justice and due process, the superintendent or principal will meet with the teacher, forthwith, to:

- clarify any misconceptions;
- advise the teacher of the behavior(s) or practice(s) that do not meet the standard(s) of quality teaching and the reason(s) for the determination;
- advise the teacher that remediation of the behavior or practice is required;
- advise the teacher of the consequence(s) of not remediating his or her behavior(s) or practices(s);
- establish the specifics of a notice for remediation that will be delivered to the teacher; and
- the superintendent or principal will prepare and deliver to the teacher a written account of the meeting.

notice for remediation

A notice for remediation will inform the teacher of:

- the teaching behavior(s) or practice(s) that have been deemed unacceptable;
- what activities the teacher will undertake to remediate the unacceptable behavior or practice including any support that will be provided the teacher;
- how the behavior or practice must change in order to be deemed acceptable;
- how the superintendent or principal will determine that the unacceptable behavior or practice has been remediated, including the evaluation criteria and standards that will be used;
- all relevant timelines which will be set to minimize disruptions to students' learning;
- that, following the end of the timelines, the teacher must maintain the expected outcome(s) of the remedial action(s) indefinitely, or for a specified time; and
- the consequences to the teacher of not remediating the behavior or practice within the specified timelines, and for not maintaining the behavior or practice for the specified time.

A notice for remediation will specify:

- that it is a lawful order of the board;
- that it comes into effect on the date it is delivered to the teacher, in person or by other means such as registered mail;
- that all timelines or periods of time specified in the notice will begin on the date it is delivered to the teacher;
- that should any timeline or period of time specified in the notice be interrupted for any reason other than a scheduled holiday or break, the timeline or period of time will be suspended for the duration of the interruption and will be reinstated on the date the interruption ends; and
- such other details as may be required to address principles of fundamental justice and due process.

suspension or termination of a contract of employment

Where a teacher is suspended or his or her contract of employment is terminated, provisions under the *School Act* and the *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation* that notice be given to the Minister or Registrar will apply.

In closing

The policy positions outlined in this paper reflect the Minister of Education's commitment to a provincial policy framework that guides individual, cooperative and collaborative actions to enhance the quality of education provided to all Alberta students.

APPENDIX A

Quality Teaching

Teachers are key to student learning, and Albertans want all students to have the best possible opportunity to learn regardless of where in the province they live. After further discussion with the education partners, the Minister of Education will require that teacher preparation programs, and certification and evaluation practices be founded on and support a professional model of teaching and a uniform quality teaching standard.

Professional model of teaching

Teaching is an activity characterized by professional judgment and decision making. Teachers have the responsibility and authority to analyse and respond to the context in which they teach by making reasoned judgments and decisions, and applying the pedagogical knowledge and abilities that will provide students the best possible opportunity to learn.

Each teaching situation is different. Reasoned judgment must be used to determine whether quality teaching is occurring in a given context.

Quality teaching standard

Quality teaching occurs when the teacher's analysis of the context, and the pedagogical knowledge and abilities the teacher decides to apply result in students having the best possible opportunity to learn.

Descriptors of quality teaching

Many of the contextual variables to which teachers respond, and many of the pedagogical knowledge and abilities they apply are elaborated below.

1. **Teachers' application of pedagogical knowledge and abilities is based in their ongoing analysis of contextual variables.**

   Teachers' analysis of contextual variables underlies their reasoned judgments and decisions about which specific pedagogical skills and abilities to apply in order to provide students the best possible opportunity to learn. Selected variables are outlined on the following page.

student variables

- demographic variables, e.g. age, gender
- maturation
- abilities and talents
- relationships among students
- subject area of study
- prior learning
- socio-economic status
- cultural background
- linguistic variables mental and emotional states and conditions

school variables

- resource availability and allocation
- teaching assignment
- class size and composition
- collegial and administrator support
- physical plant

teacher variables

- teaching experience
- learning experiences

regulatory variables

- *Government Organization Act*
- *School Act* and provincial regulations, policies and Ministerial Orders
- *Child Welfare Act*
- *Teaching Profession Act*
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- school board policies
- Guides to Education (ECS-9 and Sr Hi Handbooks)
- Programs of Study (Elem. Jr. & Sr Hi)

parent and societal variables

- parental support
- parental involvement in children's learning
- socio-economic variables
- community support for education
- multiculturalism
- cultural pluralism
- inter-agency collaboration
- provincial, national and global influences

2. Teachers understand the legislated, moral and ethical frameworks within which they work.

Teachers function within a policy-based and results-oriented education system authorized under the *Government Organization Act* and the *School Act*. These *Acts* are further elaborated in provincial regulations, Ministerial Orders, policies and initiatives. The most immediately relevant among these for teachers on a day-to-day basis are: the Guides to Education (ECS to Grade 9 Handbook and Senior High School Handbook); and the Programs of Study (Elementary, Junior High and Senior High).

Teachers also function within policy frameworks established by school boards. This includes teacher evaluation policies which require: a commitment to teaching practices that meet their board's standard(s) of quality teaching; and that teachers engage in ongoing, individualized professional development.

Teachers recognize they are bound by standards of conduct expected of a caring, knowledgeable and reasonable adult. In addition, under the *Teaching Profession Act*, the Alberta Teachers' Association enforces a "Code of Professional Conduct" which stipulates minimum but not exhaustive standards of conduct for its members. Teachers also recognize they are bound by standards of conduct established through local policies as provided for under provincial legislation, including those specified through contracts of employment.

Teachers recognize their actions are bound in moral, ethical and legal considerations regarding their obligations to students, parents, administrators, school boards, communities, and society at large. Teachers acknowledge these obligations and act accordingly.

3. Teachers understand the subject disciplines they teach.

Teachers understand the knowledge, concepts, methodologies and assumptions of the subject disciplines they teach. This includes an understanding of how knowledge in each discipline is created and organized, and that subject disciplines are more than bodies of static facts and techniques — they are complex and evolving. Their understanding extends to relevant technologies, the linkages among subject disciplines, and their relevance and importance in everyday life at the personal, local, national and international levels.

Teachers understand that students typically bring preconceptions and understandings to a subject. They know strategies and materials that are of assistance in furthering students' understanding.

4. Teachers know there are many approaches to teaching and learning.

Teachers appreciate individual differences and believe all students can learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways. They recognize students' different learning styles and the different ways they learn, and accommodate these differences in individuals and groups of students, including students with special learning needs.

Teachers understand the fluidity of teaching and learning. They constantly monitor the effectiveness and appropriateness of their practices and students' activities, and change them as needed.

5. **Teachers engage in a range of planning activities.**

   Teachers' plans are founded in their understanding of contextual variables and are a record of their decisions on what teaching and learning strategies to apply. Plans outline a reasoned and incremental progression toward the attainment of desired outcomes, for both teachers and students. Teachers monitor the context, their instruction, and monitor and assess students' learning on an ongoing basis, and modify their plans accordingly.

   Teachers strive to establish candid, open and ongoing lines of communication with students, parents, colleagues and other professionals, and incorporate information gained into their planning.

6. **Teachers create and maintain environments that are conducive to student learning.**

   Teachers establish learning environments wherein students feel physically, psychologically, socially and culturally secure. They are respectful of students' human dignity, and seek to establish a positive professional relationship with students that is characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony. They model the beliefs, principles, values and intellectual characteristics outlined in the Guides to Education and Programs of Study, and guide students to do the same.

   Teachers work, independently and cooperatively, to make their classrooms and schools stimulating learning environments. They maintain acceptable levels of student conduct, and use discipline strategies that result in a positive environment conducive to student learning. They work with students to establish classroom routines that enhance and increase students' involvement in meaningful learning activities. They organize facilities, materials, equipment and space to provide students equitable opportunities to learn, and to provide for students' safety.

   Where community members work with students either on-campus or off-campus and where students are engaged in school-sponsored off-campus activities, teachers strive to ensure these situations also are secure and positive environments conducive to students' learning.

7. Teachers translate curriculum content and objectives into meaningful learning activities.

Teachers clearly communicate short- and long-range learning expectations to students, and how the expectations are to be achieved and assessed. They engage students in meaningful activities that motivate and challenge them to achieve those expectations. They integrate current learning with prior learning, and provide opportunities for students to relate their learning to the home, community and broader environment.

Teachers apply a broad range and variety of instructional and learning strategies. The strategies vary in keeping with contextual variables, subject content, desired objectives, and the learning needs of individuals and groups of students. The strategies are selected and used to achieve desired outcomes, primarily the expectations outlined in the Guides to Education, Programs of Study and other approved programs.

8. Teachers apply a variety of technologies to meet students' learning needs.

Teachers use teaching/learning resources such as the chalkboard, texts, computers and other auditory, print and visual media, and maintain an awareness of emerging technological resources. They keep abreast of advances in teaching/learning technologies and how they can be incorporated into instruction and learning. As new technologies prove useful and become available in schools, teachers develop their own and their students' proficiencies in using the technologies purposefully, which may include content presentation, delivery and research applications, as well as word processing, information management and record keeping.

Teachers use electronic networks and other telecommunication media to enhance their own knowledge and abilities, and to communicate more effectively with others.

9. Teachers gather and use information about students' learning needs and progress.

Teachers monitor students' actions on an ongoing basis to determine and respond to their learning needs. They use a variety of diagnostic methods that include observing students' activities, analysing students' learning difficulties and strengths, and interpreting the results of assessments and information provided by students, their parents, colleagues and other professionals.

Teachers select and develop a variety of classroom assessment strategies and instruments to assess the full range of learning objectives. They differentiate between classroom and large-scale instruments such as provincial achievement tests, administer both and use the results for the ultimate benefit of students. They record, interpret and use the results of their assessments to modify their teaching practices and students' learning activities.

Teachers help students, parents and other educators interpret and understand the results of diagnoses and assessments, and the implications for students. They also help students develop the ability to diagnose their own learning needs and to assess their progress toward learning goals.

Teachers use their interpretations of diagnoses and assessments as well as students' work and results to guide their own professional growth. They assist school councils and members of the community to understand the purposes, meanings, outcomes and implications of assessments.

10. Teachers establish and maintain partnerships among school, home and community, and within their own schools.

Teachers engage in activities that contribute to the quality of the school as a learning environment. They work with others to develop, coordinate and implement programs and activities that characterize effective schools. They also work cooperatively with school councils.

Teachers strive to involve parents in their children's schooling. Partnerships with the home are characterized by the candid sharing of information and ideas to influence how teachers and parents, independently and cooperatively, contribute to students' learning.

Teachers seek out and incorporate community resources into their instruction, and encourage students to use home and community resources in their learning. Teachers make connections between school, home and community in order to enhance the relevance and meaning of learning. Home and community resources are utilized to make learning meaningful and relevant, and so students can gain an increased understanding of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to participate in and contribute positively to society.

11. Teachers are career-long learners.

Teachers engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their: understanding of and ability to analyze the context of teaching; ability to make reasoned judgments and decisions; and pedagogical knowledge and abilities. They recognize their own professional needs and work with others to meet those needs. They share their professional expertise to the benefit of others in their schools, communities and profession.

Teachers guide their actions by their overall visions of the purpose of teaching. They actively refine and redefine their visions in light of the ever-changing context, new knowledge and understandings, and their experiences. While these visions are dynamic and grow in depth and breadth over teachers' careers, the visions maintain at their core a commitment to providing students the best possible opportunity to learn.

Knowledge, Skills and Attributes for Interim Certification

After further discussions with the education partners, the Minister of Education will require that teachers who hold interim certification have the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) needed to achieve the Quality Teaching Standard early in their careers. The Minister expects holders of interim certification will focus their professional development on honing and enhancing the following KSAs acquired in their teacher preparation programs.

Knowledge, skills and attributes

Holders of interim certification understand:

- contextual variables affect teaching and learning. They know how to analyse many variables at one time, and how to respond by making reasoned decisions about their teaching practice and students' learning;
- the structure of the Alberta education system. They know the different roles in the system, and how responsibilities and accountabilities are determined, communicated and enforced, including the expectations held of them under the *Certification of Teachers Regulation* and their school boards' teacher evaluation policies;
- the purposes of the Guides to Education and Programs of Study germane to their areas of specialization. They know how to use these documents to inform and direct their planning, instruction and assessment of student progress;
- the subject discipline they teach. They have completed a structured program of studies through which they acquired an in-depth understanding of content knowledge in one or more areas of specialization or subject disciplines taught in Alberta schools;

- all students can learn, albeit at different rates and in different ways. They know how (including when and how to engage others) to identify students' different learning styles and ways students learn. They understand the need to respond to differences by creating multiple paths to learning for individuals and groups of students, including students with special learning needs;

- the purposes of short-, medium- and long-range planning. They know how to translate curriculum and desired outcomes into reasoned, meaningful, and incrementally progressive learning opportunities for students. They also understand the need to vary their plans to accommodate individual and groups of students;

- students' needs for physical, social, cultural and psychological security. They know how to engage students in creating effective classroom routines. They know how and when to apply a variety of management strategies that are in keeping with the situation, and that provide for minimal disruptions to students' learning;

- the importance of respecting students' human dignity. They know how to establish, with different students, positive professional relationships that are characterized by mutual respect, trust and harmony;

- there are many approaches to teaching and learning. They know a broad range of instructional strategies appropriate to their areas of specialization and the subject discipline they teach, and know which strategies are appropriate to help different students achieve different outcomes;

- the functions of traditional and electronic teaching/learning technologies. They know how to use, and how to engage students in using these technologies to present and deliver content, communicate effectively with others, find and secure information, research, word process, manage information, and keep records.

- the purposes of student assessment. They know how to assess the range of learning objectives by selecting and developing a variety of classroom and large-scale assessment techniques and instruments. They know how to analyse the results of classroom and large-scale assessment instruments including provincial assessment instruments, and how to use the results for the ultimate benefit of students;

- the importance of engaging parents, purposefully and meaningfully, in all aspects of teaching and learning. They know how to develop and implement strategies that create and enhance partnerships among teacher, parents and students;

- student learning is enhanced through the use of home and community resources. They know how to identify resources relevant to teaching and learning objectives, and how to incorporate these resources into their teaching and students' learning;

- the importance of contributing, independently and collegially, to the quality of their school. They know strategies whereby they can, independently and collegially, enhance and maintain the quality of their schools to the benefit of students, parents, community and colleagues;
- the importance of career-long learning. They know how to evaluate their own teaching, and how to work with others responsible for evaluating teachers. They know how to use the findings of evaluations to select and develop their own professional development activities;
- the importance of guiding their actions with a personal, overall vision of the purpose of teaching. They are able to communicate their vision, including how it has changed as a result of new knowledge, understandings and experiences; and
- they are expected to achieve the *Quality Teaching Standard*, i.e. providing students the best possible opportunity to learn.